

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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R 101005Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY LOME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7159
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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STADIS////////////////////

FOR AF/EX - BRADFORD FROM AMBASSADOR

LAGOS FOR RSO; OUAGADOUGOU FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, ASEC
SUBJ: MARINE SECURITY GUARDS

REF: STATE 249033

1. ALTHOUGH I CANNOT IN ALL CONSCIENCE STATE THAT THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY "OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS" AGAINST ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARINE SECURITY GUARD IN LOME, I NEVERTHELESS SEE LITTLE, IF ANY POSITIVE VALUE IN HAVING SUCH A UNIT HERE AND MANY REASONS WHY IT WOULD BE AN INCONVENIENCE, AN ADMINISTRATIVE HEADACHE, AND A SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL HANDICAP. IN MY OVER THREE YEARS ON THIS POST I HAVE NOT EVEN ON ONE OCCASION WISHED THAT I HAD A MARINE DETACHMENT.

2. AN MSG COULD OBVIOUSLY PROVIDE MORE PHYSICAL SECURITY TO EMBASSY, LOME, ESPECIALLY FOR ITS COMMUNICATIONS AND CLASSIFIED RECORDS. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE DEPARTMENT'S PURPOSE IN PROPOSING TO ESTABLISH SUCH A UNIT HERE. ACCORDING TO REFTTEL, THAT PURPOSE IS TO COMBAT TERRORISM. SINCE MOST TERRORISM IS DIRECTED AT INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN

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AT PROPERTY PER SE, THE TERRORISTS NEED ONLY TO FIND THEIR

VICTIMS AT THEIR UNPROTECTED MOMENTS - WHICH IS JUST ABOUT ALL THE TIME. AN MSG WOULD SOMEWHAT ENHANCE SECURITY OF AMBASSADOR AND OTHER STAFF MEMBERS DURING OFFICE HOURS, WHILE THEY WERE IN THE CHANCERY. IT WOULD BE OF ABSOLUTELY NO USE AT RESIDENCE, WHICH IT APPARENTLY DOES NOT COVER (THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY REQUIRE MORE THAN A FIVE WATCHSTANDING AND ONE NON-WATCHSTANDING DETAIL), OR DURING ALL THE NECESSARY MOVEMENT OF AMBASSADOR AND OTHER STAFF MEMBERS ABOUT TOWN ON BUSINESS, OFFICIAL SOCIAL EVENTS, AND RECREATION. AND THESE MUST GO ON, IF WE ARE TO DO OUR JOBS AND TO LIVE REASONABLY NORMAL LIVES. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THERE WAS AN MSG IN KHARTOUM, BUT EVEN IF THERE HAD BEEN ONE IT WOULD NOT HAVE SAVED LIVES OF CLEO NOEL AND CURTIS MOORE AT SAUDI EMBASSY.

3. ON PURELY NEGATIVE SIDE IS AMOUNT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK INVOLVED IN FEEDING AND CARING FOR AN MSG. FIRST, THERE MUST BE A MARINE HOUSE, WITH ALL OF ITS LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS, AND, PERHAPS, QUARTERS FOR A MARRIED GUNNERY SGT. OUR SOLE AMERICAN ADMIN/SECURITY OFFICER WOULD FIND A GOOD PART OF HIS TIME AND ENERGY DEVOTED TO MSG'S PROBLEMS: OFFICIAL, PERSONAL, AND DISCIPLINARY. ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONING TRANSPORTATION WOULD BE REQUIRED. EMBASSY WOULD SPEND AS MUCH TIME AND RESOURCES TAKING CARE OF MARINES AS LATTER WOULD IN TAKING CARE OF EMBASSY. FINALLY, UNLESS QUALITY OF MSG HAS RISEN FROM SURPRISING LOW REACHED DURING MY LAST TOUR IN MOROCCO - WHERE THREE MARINES BEAT UP ONE MOROCCAN POLICEMAN, DISARMED ANOTHER AND STOLE HIS WEAPON, AND AWAKENED AT DAWN NEXT MORNING TO FIND MARINE HOUSE SURROUNDED BY 30 ARMED AND ANGRY MOROCCAN POLICEMEN, REQUIRING RESCUE BY RSO AND CHARGE (ME) - THEIR VALUE IS QUESTIONABLE. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THAT PARTICULAR MSG DETACHMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN REMOVED FROM OTHER EMBASSIES FOR SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS BEFORE BEING ASSIGNED TO RABAT.

4. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, ALSO, I THINK, IT IS WRONG TO HAVE A LARGE MSG AT A MINISCULE EMBASSY IN A TINY, FISHBOWL CAPITAL. (PERHAPS IT IS EVEN WRONG PSYCHOLOGICALLY IN LARGER CITIES AND COUNTRIES.) ADDITION OF SIX MARINES TO EMBASSY STAFF OF SEVEN WOULD DOUBLE AMERICAN COMPLEMENT OF THIS EMBASSY. EVEN COUNTING REMAINING CT AMERICANS - I.E. ONE USIS, ONE AID, AND 3 PC STAFF - MARINES WOULD CONSTITUTE ONE-THIRD OF ENTIRE US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MISSION AMERICAN STAFF IN TOGO. WE WOULD LOOK SILLY - NOT TO MENTION SCARED - BUT I REALIZE THAT THIS MAY BE NOT AN "OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION."

5. IF I THOUGHT FOR ONE MINUTE THAT AN MSG COULD SAVE AN AMERICAN LIFE AT HANDS OF A DETERMINED TERRORIST, I WOULD FIND THAT AN OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION IN FAVOR OF HAVING SUCH A DETACHMENT. HOWEVER, I DO NOT AT ALL THINK THIS TO BE THE

CASE. I HOPE THAT IN ESTABLISHING A "POLICY" OF HAVING AN MSG AT ALL EMBASSIES AND POSSIBLY SOME CONSULATES GENERAL (WHY THE DISTINCTION?) THE DEPARTMENT IS NOT, EVEN THOUGH SURELY UNINTENTIONALLY, SIMPLY ACTING FOR ACTION'S SAKE.

6. FOREGOING IS MY OPINION. I HAVE DISCUSSED QUESTION AT SOME LENGTH WITH COUNTRY TEAM. ONE MEMBER FAVORS ESTABLISHMENT OF MSG - NOT AS ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURE, WHICH HE DOES NOT CONSIDER IT CAPABLE OF BEING - BUT SIMPLY FOR GREATER SECURITY OF EMBASSY'S CLASSIFIED RECORDS AND EQUIPMENT. REMAINING FOUR CT MEMBERS BELIEVE THAT MSG WOULD NOT SERVE SUCCESSFULLY AS ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURE. THIS GROUP CONSIDERS PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT TO BE "OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION" AGAINST ESTABLISHMENT OF DETACHMENT. GROUP BELIEVES ESTABLISHMENT OF MSG IN LOME WOULD PRESENT IMAGE OF BESIEGED AND FARFUL EMBASSY, WHICH SEES ITSELF AS EXPOSED OUTPOST IN HOSTILE AND INHOSPITABLE COUNTRY, WHICH TOGO CERTAINLY IS NOT. ONE MEMBER OF THIS GROUP OF FOUR, WHILE AGREEING COMPLETELY WITH FOREGOING, IS NEVERTHELESS OF OPINION T
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